

Annual Report

TO THE

BEDLINGTONSHIRE

Urban District Council,

FOR THE YEAR 1918,

BY

 W. HUDSON, 

Medical Officer of Health.

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TO THE CHAIRMAN AND MEMBERS

OF THE

Bedlingtonshire Urban District Council.

MR. CHAIRMAN AND GENTLEMEN,

I beg to submit the Report on the Health and Sanitary Condition of your District for the year 1918. Owing to the difficulty in estimating the population, the figures, as in previous years, cannot be considered of true statistical value, but only approximate records.

GENERAL SUMMARY.

Another year of war has only accentuated the undesirable conditions of former years, and the energies of the L.A. have again been towards mitigation of such circumstances rather than progressive Sanitation. Even with all these difficulties and visitations of certain diseases in epidemic form, whereby the Death Rate has considerably increased, yet the Infantile Mortality Rate is slightly lower. The prevalence and death rate from Tuberculosis, although still extremely high, has also decreased; but no marked change can be anticipated in this direction until the housing and overcrowding problem has been solved. From a point of view of Infectious Diseases, the outbreaks of Enteric Fever and Influenza have been outstanding, and whilst the former reached serious dimensions, it was the culmination of yearly epidemics, all of the same origin, and has been the means of conclusively proving the necessity of a pure water supply, such as is now provided. The Influenza outbreaks occurred in July and November, and the disease at first appeared comparatively new, and probably the result of war conditions. The preventative measures adopted undoubtedly assisted in arresting the spread of infection and were productive of good results, regardless of the stupidity of a portion of the community who, as it were, seemed to heedlessly expose themselves to infection.

The L.A. have again been confronted with the ever-increasing overcrowding, due to deficiency in housing and increased number of marriages, both the result of war; a condition which can only safely be remedied by steady progression. The Housing Scheme throughout the year has received the primary consideration of the Council, and in course of time but not immediately, this serious problem will be solved.

Regarding the Maternity and Child Welfare, much valuable work has been done by this department, and it is only as time goes on that the good results will be more convincing, and particularly so when housing conditions are improved.

DEATH RATE.

During the year 395 deaths—195 of males and 200 of females—have been registered in the district. There were 10 outward and 28 inward transfers, which makes the total number allocated to the district 413, as compared with 335 in the previous year. Calculated on the population as 23,098 supplied by the Registrar General, which excludes all non-civilian males serving at home and abroad, this gives a Death Rate of 17·8 per 1000, compared with 14·1 in 1917. The increase is almost entirely attributed to the large number of deaths from Influenza.

BIRTH RATE.

During the year 624 Birth—325 of Boys and 299 of Girls—were registered. This includes 39 Illegitimate Births—25 of Boys and 14 of Girls. Calculated on the figure 25,880, which includes all the elements contributing to the Birth and Marriage rates, namely, the civil population plus non-civilians enlisted from the country, this gives an Annual Birth Rate of 24·1 per 1000. The Birth Rate of the previous year was 21·2 per 1000.

INFANT MORTALITY.

The Infantile Mortality Rate for the year is 115 per 1000 Births, which is a slight decrease on the previous year of 120. This is still much too high, and we cannot possibly look to any substantial decrease until overcrowding has been remedied and housing conditions improved. It is only the work of the Maternity and Child Welfare which has been the means of mitigating this serious and unnecessary loss of life, and by the help of this department many children have improved in health to such an extent as even in war conditions to be strong enough to battle with the ravages of Influenza, which accounted directly for 5 deaths, whilst Pneumonia and Bronchitis, which may have been of Influenzal origin, accounted for 10 deaths under 1 year.

Summer Diarrhoea, of which 51 cases were notified, accounted for 6 deaths.

Whooping Cough of a virulent type accounted for 8 deaths under 1 year in the months of March and April. It is advisable for the L.A. to consider the notification of the disease on lines similar to Measles, whereby the Health Visitors may have an opportunity to assist in combating this serious infantile infection.

Of 39 Illegitimate Children, there were 9 deaths—6 Male and 3 of Females under 1 year, the Infantile Death Rate being much higher in illegitimate children than in legitimate.

SUMMARY OF BIRTHS FOR THE YEAR 1918.

		West														Total
		Netherton.		Bedlington.		Sleekburn.		Cambois.		Sleekburn.		Choppington.				
		B	G	B	G	B	G	B	G	B	G	B	G	B	G	
January	...	4	2	4	9	6	4	3	2	5	3	8	4	30	24	
February	...	2	2	7	3	4	8	2	1	0	2	3	5	18	21	
March	...	3	3	6	5	5	6	3	1	5	1	4	6	26	22	
April	...	4	3	3	8	9	12	1	3	3	4	2	4	22	34	
May	...	2	7	7	6	3	3	3	3	4	4	11	3	30	26	
June	...	1	4	10	8	6	3	4	3	3	0	10	5	34	23	
July	...	1	4	15	10	7	5	2	2	4	4	6	6	35	31	
August	...	4	2	11	12	8	6	3	0	3	1	6	2	35	23	
September	...	3	1	5	7	8	2	2	2	5	4	4	6	27	22	
October	..	3	2	8	5	3	9	2	2	3	3	6	7	25	28	
November	...	1	1	3	5	11	5	2	2	0	1	6	7	23	21	
December	...	1	3	6	4	6	3	1	4	0	3	6	7	20	24	
		29	34	85	82	76	66	28	25	35	30	72	62	325	299	

Illegitimate (included in foregoing Summary) : Boys 25, Girls, 14 ;
Total, 39.

SUMMARY OF DEATHS DURING THE YEAR 1918.

		West														Total.
		Netherton.		Bedlington.		Sleekburn.		Cambois.		Sleekburn.		Choppington.				
		M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	
January	...	2	1	3	1	4	7	1	2	3	4	1	0	14	15	
February	...	0	1	9	5	7	6	2	1	2	2	4	4	24	19	
March	...	0	3	6	7	5	9	1	0	1	2	1	1	14	22	
April	...	2	1	4	2	3	5	3	1	0	1	2	5	14	15	
May	..	1	1	4	10	6	4	2	1	0	0	3	1	16	17	
June	...	1	0	1	1	7	2	2	1	0	0	0	3	11	7	
July	...	1	3	5	5	3	8	2	3	0	2	3	2	14	23	
August	...	0	0	5	4	4	1	0	0	2	0	3	0	14	5	
September	...	0	1	4	2	0	2	4	1	0	1	0	0	8	7	
October	...	1	1	5	7	2	6	0	1	0	0	1	1	9	16	
November	...	1	1	10	11	8	7	6	4	4	3	8	7	37	33	
December	...	0	0	6	3	4	8	1	4	0	2	9	4	20	21	
		9	13	62	58	53	65	24	19	12	17	35	28	195	200	

Deaths of Illegitimate Children under 1 year (included in foregoing Summary) : Males, 6 ; Females, 3 ; Total, 9.

DEATHS ALLOCATED TO THE DISTRICT AT THE VARIOUS PERIODS OF LIFE.

	Under 1 year.	1-2 years.	2-5 yrs.	5-15 yrs.	15-25 yrs.	25-45 yrs.	45-65 yrs.	65 yrs. & over.	Total.
Certified ...	70	16	33	36	36	62	60	87	400
Uncertified	3	0	0	1	0	0	2	7	13
Totals ...	73	16	33	37	36	62	62	94	413

TABLE OF DEATHS REGISTERED IN THE DISTRICT AT THE VARIOUS PERIODS OF LIFE. (ALL CAUSES.)

	Under 1 year.	1-2 yrs.	2-5 yrs.	5-15 yrs.	15-25 yrs.	25-45 yrs.	45-65 yrs.	65 yrs. & over.	Total.
Certified ...	71	17	32	36	33	59	52	82	382
Uncertified	3	0	0	1	0	0	2	7	13

CAUSES OF DEATHS REGISTERED IN THE DISTRICT.

CAUSES OF DEATH.	AT ALL AGES.
1 Enteric Fever	20
2 Measles	2
3 Whooping Cough	12
4 Diphtheria	3
5 Influenza	64
6 Pulmonary Tuberculosis	35
7 Other Forms of Tuberculosis	6
8 Cancer	17
9 Meningitis	1
10 Organic Heart Disease	21
11 Bronchitis	13
12 Pneumonia	41
13 Diarrhoea and Enteritis	7
14 Cirrhosis of Liver	1
15 Nephritis	12
16 Other Accidents and Diseases of Pregnancy and Parturition	3
17 Premature Birth, Congenital Mal- formation and Debility	30
18 Violent Deaths excluding Suicide	1
19 Other defined Diseases	83
20 Diseases ill-defined	1
Totals	382

10 Outward Transfers and 28 Inward Transfers, making a total allocated to the district of 413. There was 1 death from Measles as an Outward Transfer, and 1 death from Enteric Fever as an Outward Transfer.

The unusually high number of deaths is due to Influenza, 64; Pneumonia 41, the majority of which may be associated with Influenza; and Enteric Fever, 20.

THE CAUSES OF DEATH AT VARIOUS PERIODS OF LIFE UNDER 1 YEAR.

CAUSE OF DEATH.	Under 1 week.	1-2 weeks.	2-3 weeks.	3-4 weeks.	Total under 1 month.	1-3 months.	3-6 months.	6-9 months.	9-12 months.	Total under 1 year.
Measles				1	1	3	1	2	1	8
Whooping Cough								3	2	5
Influenza									2	5
Pneumonia			1		1	2	1		1	5
Bronchitis				2	2	3	1	1		7
Tuberculosis					1					1
Convulsions	1				1					1
Asphyxia	1				1					1
Syphilis							4	1	1	6
Infective Enteritis	3				3					3
Congenital Malformation			2		2	1	1	1		5
Marasmus	3		3		6	1				7
Debility from Birth	12	3	1		16	1				17
Prematurity				1	1				1	1
Gastritis										1
Pemphigus										1
Totals	20	3	7	4	34	11	8	11	8	72

Nett Deaths under 1 year—Legitimate Infants, 14; Illegitimate Infants, 6.

ALLOCATION OF ZYMOTIC DEATHS TO SUB-DISTRICTS.

	Netherton.	Bedlington.	Sleekburn.	Cambois.	West Sleekburn.	Choppington.	Total.
Enteric Fever	4	4	5	2	1	4	21
Smallpox	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Measles	0	0	1	0	0	0	1
Scarlet Fever	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Whooping Cough... ..	1	4	2	4	0	1	12
Diphtheria and Croup	0	2	1	0	0	0	3
Diarrhœa and Enteritis (under 2 years)	0	4	1	0	0	1	6
Totals	5	15	10	6	1	6	43

PREVALENCE OF INFECTIVE ENTERITIS NOTIFIED IN THE VARIOUS SUB-DISTRICTS.

	1-3 months.	3-6 months.	6-9 months.	9-12 months.	1-2 years.	Total.
Bedlington	0	2	0	3	4	9
Sleekburn	0	2	0	3	4	9
Choppington	0	5	2	3	16	26
West Sleekburn	0	0	0	1	2	3
Cambois	0	0	0	0	0	0
Netherton	0	0	0	0	4	4
Totals	0	9	2	10	30	51

These cases occurred principally in the congested area of Guide Post, where ventilation was imperfect and infection abundant. This is by no means the total number of cases which occurred, as many were never notified, but received treatment by the Health Visitors in their work. It is regrettable that the L.G.B. has been unable to consider this measure as part and parcel of the Maternity and Child Welfare Scheme, and give a grant accordingly, when the notification is the only means by which the Health Visitors can assist in dealing with the disease and save infant life. Perhaps after a very hot summer in which the disease assumes considerable dimensions, as it has on former occasions and carried off infants unmercifully, they might awaken to the necessity of such a measure.

CONSIDERATION OF THE DEATHS FROM PULMONARY TUBERCULOSIS IN THE VARIOUS SUB-DISTRICTS.

	Under 1 year.	1-2	2-5	5-15	15-25	25-45	45-65	65 or over.	Total.
Netherton	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	1
Bedlington	0	0	1	3	3	2	4	0	13
Sleekburn	0	0	0	0	2	6	0	0	8
Choppington	0	0	1	1	2	2	0	0	6
West Sleekburn	0	1	0	1	2	1	0	0	5
Cambois	0	0	0	0	2	0	0	0	2
Totals	0	1	2	5	12	11	4	0	35

Of the 6 deaths from other forms of Tuberculosis, 4 occurred in Bedlington and 2 in Choppington.

Total number of deaths from Tuberculosis is 41—Females 29, and Males 12—the preponderance of females being due to their indoor life.

Death Rate in the District from Tuberculosis—1·7 per 1000 population.

PREVALENCE OF TUBERCULOSIS IN THE VARIOUS SUB-DISTRICTS.

	MALES.	FEMALES.	TOTAL.
Netherton	2	0	2
Bedlington	9	13	22
Sleekburn	13	8	21
Choppington	15	9	24
West Sleekburn	3	14	17
Cambois	3	1	4
	45	45	90

The Death Rate from Tuberculosis was lower than in the previous year, whilst the incidence of the disease displayed a greater decrease, and these circumstances might be accountable by the effects of Sanatorium treatment. Like all infectious disease, we cannot expect to see much change in the prevalence of Tuberculosis until many of the congested areas have been demolished, and a free supply of light and ventilation given to each house, particularly in the sleeping rooms. It might also be mentioned that unfortunately, in many of the houses in the District the windows are either imperfect or inadequate, and it is highly desirable that owners of property should not lose sight of the grave dangers arising from imperfect ventilation, and, wherever necessary, give such repair in order to meet these requirements. Many persons would avail themselves of good ventilation if

housing conditions permitted. Even with all these favourable circumstances we cannot expect good results until the State presses forward more drastic preventative measures, particularly regarding advanced cases of Pulmonary Tuberculosis. It is unnecessary to enlarge on this subject, which has been fully dealt with in previous Reports.

PREVALENCE OF OTHER INFECTIOUS DISEASES.

	Netherton.	Bedlington.	Choppington.	Sleekburn.	West Sleekburn.	Cambois.	Total.
Measles ...	2	1	17	3	8	1	32
Scarlet Fever ..	0	1	2	1	4	1	9
Diphtheria ...	0	7	2	4	0	0	13
Erysipelas ...	0	3	2	2	2	2	11
Opthalmia Neonatorum	0	3	2	1	0	0	6
Total ..	2	15	25	11	14	4	71

1 Military case of Scarlet Fever occurred at Cambois previous to any civil case.

Measles were principally localised to Guide Post and Stakeford areas.

ENTERIC FEVER.

A serious outbreak occurred in January, resulting in 130 cases between January 14th and April 12th, 1918. Subsequent cases occurred during the remainder of the year, bringing the total number up to 141. In the report of 1917 reference was made to the conditions governing the seasonal incidence of the disease, and the history of many previous years bear testimony to the fact that the water supply for a considerable period had been polluted, and climatic conditions in December, 1916, resulted in an explosive outbreak. The first case was notified on January 14th, 1918, and cases occurred throughout the district in rapid succession. After exclusion of various likely sources of infection, from circumstances associated with the outbreak, it was evident that the vehicle was the water supply, and that this had been infected about December 15th, 1917, after severe frost and a sudden thaw, whereby the sand filters were incapable of adequately carrying on the work of filtration, and allowed the infection to pass into the water supply. On the advice of your Medical Officer, the L.A. immediately adopted temporary measures in the nature of recommending the boiling of water until arrangements could be agreed to with Tynemouth for a supply of pure water, which, fortunately, was easily accessible from the main under existing conditions.

On January 25th, 1918, Dr. Hutchinson, from the L.G.B., investigated the outbreak and corroborated the findings. Special reports were furnished by the Medical Officer to the L.G.B. on January 24th, 1918, February 10th, 1918, and March 12th, 1918, and the Council was regularly informed of the circumstances of the infection.

Previous to the outbreak, Bacteriological Examination of the Water on December 11th, 1917, showed it to be satisfactory considering the nature of the supply, whilst examination on the occurrence of the outbreak proved it to be infected with human excrement. It is unnecessary to tabulate the results of the frequent Bacteriological Examinations taken from the supply before and after filtration, and at various distances from the Water Works.

After the exclusion of likely sources of pollution, it was concluded that the River Blyth was infected from privy midden refuse applied to agricultural land, and carried by the Ewart Hill Dean Stream to the River. The disease was of a virulent type, and on account of insufficient hospital accommodation, a certain number of cases were removed to Blyth Port Sanitary Hospital. Of 141 cases notified, 101 were removed to hospital and 40 nursed in their homes.

Every sanitary measure was adopted in order to prevent the spread of infection; houses and infected areas were supervised by the Sanitary Inspector.

There were 21 deaths, 11 in hospital and 10 at their homes—101 cases nursed in hospital with 11 deaths=11 per cent. Mortality Rate; 40 cases nursed in their homes with 10 deaths=25 per cent. Mortality Rate. This emphasizes the advisability of hospital treatment in this disease.

INCIDENCES OF THE DISEASE IN THE VARIOUS SUB-DISTRICTS.

Netherton.	Bedlington.	Choppington.	Sleekburn.	West Sleekburn.	Cambois.	Total.
15	38	32	42	4	10	141

In all probability a considerable number of mild ambulatory cases would not receive treatment in such a widespread epidemic, and it might thus safely be said that, approximately, 200 persons would be infected. The protective power of Inoculation was well exemplified by the fact that amongst several hundreds of soldiers billeted in the district throughout the outbreak, and drinking the same water, not a single case of Enteric Fever occurred.

Of the Non-Notifiable Infectious Diseases apart from Whooping Cough, of a virulent type which appeared in March and April, the district has been comparatively free from infection.

EPIDEMIC INFLUENZA.

This infection, which at first appeared to be a new disease, has now been recognised as being that which appeared in epidemic form in 1892, the same organism having been discovered in the present outbreak as in previous years. The attack was widespread and probably due to war conditions, in which soldiers are more closely assembled, especially during sleeping hours, than in civil life. This allows of the free passage of the germ from mouth to mouth, and by such passage the virulence of the organism is gradually increased. It is now conclusively proved that the Influenza Bacillus in itself produces mild uncomplicated Catarrh, in which the duration of the fever is short, and serious pulmonary complications are uncommon. In the malignant cases in which other organisms, such as Streptococci and Pneumococcus are present in conjunction with the Influenza Bacillus, the serious complications known as Broncho and Lobar Pneumonia are likely to arise, and again the severity of the Pneumonia depends on the virulence of the complicating germ, which, like the Influenza Bacillus, has been enhanced in its passage from mouth to mouth. There is every reason to consider that the infection was introduced into the district by soldiers on leave, and many concrete cases can be quoted to corroborate this statement, such circumstances being particularly noticeable in the outbreaks of October and November. The disease first appeared in July in a milder form, was highly contagious, and accounted for

12 deaths in that month. In addition, there were 4 cases of Pneumonia, which were probably Influenzal in nature, and would not have occurred under normal conditions in the month of July. There was a period of comparative quiescence during August and September, when, in October, the disease returned with increased virulence. It rapidly spread amongst children, but early school closure checked the extension in this direction, after which, young adults attending places of amusement and assembly were principally attacked. This was borne out by the fact that a large majority of deaths occurred between the ages of 15 and 30 years, whilst there were few amongst children.

The areas particularly affected from a mortality standpoint were Cambois, Sleekburn, Stakeford and Guide Post. Not only was there a difference in the severity of the attack in individuals, but the same might be said of the areas already mentioned, in which the virulence of the organism appeared to have been in many cases so intense as to produce rapid complications with early fatal termination. Similarly, in many houses, the persons attacked all appeared to be slightly or severely affected depending upon the intensity of the infection in that particular case. It is significant that during the severe epidemic in October and November Tonsillitis was common, and bacteriologically, the *Streptococcus*, one of the known organisms of complicated Influenza, was found to be the cause of the sore throat condition.

The following conclusions have been arrived at concerning the outbreak:—

- (1) There are two types of the disease, simple and complicated, the severity in each case depending upon the virulence of the infection.
- (2) Broncho-Pneumonia and Lobar Pneumonia, but principally the former, accounted for the majority of fatal cases, although in a few instances rapid toxæmia caused death before pulmonary complication developed.
- (3) The complicated cases exhibited continued high-temperature prostration, Naso-Pharyngeal Inflammation with deafness and Epistaxis Laryngitis, Suppurative Bronchitis and Broncho-Pneumonia, whilst, clinically, and to a certain degree, bacteriologically resembled Enteric Fever.
- (4) The Incubation period of the disease was apparently from 36-48 hours, during which, in many cases, the temperature was sub-normal.
- (5) Convalescence was delayed with occasional evening rise in temperature.
- (6) Pregnant women appeared very susceptible, and premature labour was not uncommon in those affected, whilst not only did the nursing mother suffer from the debilitating effects, but the new-born infants were below the standard at birth.
- (7) From statistics, there is no reason to consider that persons suffering from Pulmonary Tuberculosis were in any way more seriously affected or deaths more common except in cases where home conditions were unsuitable.
- (8) Latent complications affecting the nose, throat, and ear are common.
- (9) During the epidemic, cases of Acute Nephritis in many ways resembling Trench Fever were not uncommon, and may have some bearing on the Influenza outbreak.
- (10) From records of the two outbreaks, there is evidence to show that one attack either protects against a second attack or modifies it.

- (11) Inoculation is an indisputable protective measure against Influenza, and if not definitely protective, it modifies the attack, shortens the duration of fever, and limits the complications.
- (12) The mode of infection is from mouth to mouth, whereby it is advisable to secure ample ventilation in rooms, and avoid places of assembly.

TABLE OF DEATHS IN THE VARIOUS SUB-DISTRICTS.

	Under 1 year.	1-5.	5-15.	15-25.	25-45.	45-65.	65 or over.	Total.
Netherton	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0
Bedlington	3	2	3	2	4	0	0	14
Sleekburn	0	6	2	4	2	4	0	18
Choppington	2	4	2	1	5	0	0	14
West Sleekburn	0	0	2	1	3	1	0	7
Cambois	0	2	1	2	4	1	0	10
Totals	5	14	10	10	19	6	0	64

The effect of Early School Closure is shown in the following table :—

Of 12 deaths in the July epidemic 3 occurred in children of school age.—School Closure not recommended.

Of 52 deaths in the November epidemic 7 occurred in children of school age.—Early School Closure recommended.

The preventative measures prescribed by the L.A. may have assisted in dealing with the outbreak, but unfortunately the individual, who certainly must be cognisant of the seriousness of the disease, values his liberty and pleasures more than his life. The thanks of the L.A. are due to the various Co-operative Societies, who, at a financial loss closed the halls to amusement, and other organisations who likewise adopted the recommendations of the Medical Officer.

Isolation Hospitals. { Small Pox Hospital, Stakeford.
 { Infectious Diseases Hospital, Bank Top,
 Bedlington.

103 cases of definite and suspected cases of Enteric Fever were treated in Hospital during the year.

It might be advisable when the opportunity arises of extending the Infectious Diseases Hospital, and constructing wards on the Block System, whereby the Scarlet Fever and Diphtheria cases may be separately treated, the present conditions not being suitable for such work.

MATERNITY AND CHILD WELFARE WORK.

During the past year the Council has appreciated every measure recommended to preserve infant life, and assist in decreasing the continued High Infantile Mortality. There was never greater need for such noble work, and although difficulties, as anticipated, would arise, yet it may safely be said that the work has now been placed on a sound footing, and only requires extension to the Sub-Districts.

More commodious premises have kindly been granted at a nominal fee in the Primitive Methodist Church, and the weekly attendance of babies and mothers is rapidly increasing. It is only within the past 6 months that the good results of the work have become so clearly visible as to be highly worthy of extension. At the time of writing, a new centre has been established at Guide Post, and in a short time the Council will consider the opening of centres at Sleekburn and West Sleekburn, with the hope that the latter might meet the needs of Cambois in the same manner as Bedlington supplies Netherton. The opportunities afforded in necessitous cases for supply of Glaxo and Virol at reduced prices have undoubtedly assisted in the success of the Centre.

Although we have been face to face with the undesirable conditions of war, increased overcrowding, insanitary housing, and the effects of Epidemic Influenza, the latter not only as regards expectant mothers but infant life, yet the Infantile Rate is slightly reduced. We must surely attribute a considerable portion of credit to the work of the Maternity and Child Welfare Centre.

There is no doubt that with an extension of the scheme and better housing conditions, there will be a marked fall in the Death Rate. The work of the H.Vs. and objects of the Centres have already been outlined in previous Reports.

Council Offices,
Bedlington.

Mr. Chairman and Gentlemen,

We beg to submit our report for the year ending December 31st, 1918.

During the year 624 births were registered, this includes 25 illegitimate births, 17 males and 8 females.

Notification of births received were 612.

41 babies died under 1 month, 7 under 3 months, 8 under 6 months, 9 under 9 months, 7 under 12 months. The illegitimate deaths included were 4 males. This makes an Infant Mortality Rate of 115 per 1000.

In the months of January, February, March and April, Whooping Cough was very prevalent; later in the year Epidemic Influenza with its complications of Broncho-Pneumonia, etc., was responsible for 22 deaths. Expectant mothers suffering from this disease (or its after effects) were so weakened that when birth occurred, a big percentage of babies died under the first week through debility and general weakness.

2509 visits were paid, 6 infants left the district, therefore, were not re-visited.

2503 visits were made to the infants requiring re-visiting. These may be classed as :—

- (1) Infants fed on artificial foods, or partly so.
- (2) Premature infants.
- (3) Where mothers are likely to give up breast-feeding at an early date.
- (4) Infants whose family history is unsatisfactory.

On July 9th, we opened an Infants' and Child Welfare at Bedlington. Mothers and babies attending the first week were 3. The numbers increased rapidly, until at the end of 6 months (December) the total number registered was 2717. The Centre was held each Tuesday afternoon. Glaxo and Virol were supplied from the Centre, hoping thereby to encourage and help the mothers to keep up the standard of their health, and so continue breast-feeding.

The Centre has been found most helpful ; it is clearly shown the mothers appreciate the advice given by bringing their elder children who are delicate, the ages ranging from 2 to 5 years.

The full benefits resulting from attendance at the Centre cannot be estimated at present, but it should have a great bearing on all that makes for health in the babies and children generally.

In the months of July, August and September, 51 cases of Enteritis were notified. 4 babies died from this disease. 186 visits were paid to these cases—it being found necessary to re-visit many of the graver cases several times in order to ensure that the advice given as to diet, attention to cleanliness, etc., was fully carried out.

5 cases of Ophthalmia Neonatorum occurred, these received 82 visits. Where the District Nurse was not attending, daily visits with treatment was given—7 cases of Diphtheria, 5 Scarlet Fever, 27 Measles, were notified. These were visited, special attention given to urge the following out of the doctor's instructions and isolation, and so prevent the infection being spread through the district.

Thanking you for your continued interest in our work.

Your obedient servants,

A. PEART,
V. A. N. DAVIES.

EXTRACTS FROM SURVEYOR'S REPORT BOOK, 1918.

Sewerage.—

Wood Road Section—Relaid for length of 100 yards. Taylor's field relaid 30 yards. 9 in. Outlet at Cambois lengthened by 25 yards. Gullies fixed at Baptist Yard for Owner. Shop Row Channel repaired.

Scavenging.

Scavenging carried out by the Surveyor in six out of twenty Sub-Districts:—

- Bedlington No. 2.
- Bedlington No. 3.
- Bedlington Station No. 1.
- Bedlington Station No. 2.
- Seotland Gate.
- Choppington Low Pit.

Efforts to reduce water level at Choppington Station deposit have been successful. A quantity of ashpit refuse has been led to clayhole behind Burn's Row to level ground now used as gardens.

Allotments.

(a) Permanent—Choppington Road (Clayton Estate) New Section, 30 Plots of 1 chain each.

(b) Temporary—Sheepwash Bank, 53 Plots of 1 chain each.

„ Ravensworth Terrace, Bedlington Station, 10 Plots of $\frac{1}{2}$ chain each.

Water Supply.—

A daily supply of water has been taken from Tynemouth Corporation's main since January 28th, 1918. Usual repairs to mains, pants, etc., have been carried out. Services have been laid at Netherton Colliery and to West Sleekburn Cemetery.

It is proposed to carry out a sewerage scheme in course of preparation by the Surveyor, which is to provide a main outlet sewer into tidal water, and to relieve the Sleekburn Burn, Green Letch and Willow Burn, of pollutions. The scheme will take in all the branch sewers from Bomarsund, Red Row, Scotland Gate, Sunnyside, Choppington Colliery and Netherton Colliery. The drainage from about 1400 houses will be taken into this main sewer.

REPORT OF MR. LAVERICK, SANITARY INSPECTOR.

Dwelling Houses.—

15 were found defective, and the necessary repairs carried out. 8 houses were closed in Coach Road on account of dilapidation and dampness. In 57 cases repairs were executed to defective W.C.'s, after informal notice had been served. In 21 cases defective drains had been repaired.

Conversions of 4 Privies to W.C.'s were carried out, whilst 4 additional W.C.'s were constructed.

The following insanitary drains were renewed :—

*Insanitary Drains.**Work effected.*

Bedlington—Walkes' Property (1)	...	50 yards of sanitary pipes laid with gullies and I.C.
Bedlington—Smith's Property (1)	...	25 yards of sanitary pipes laid with gullies and I.C. Cesspool abolished.
Bedlington—Bishop Meadows (2)	...	50 yards of sanitary pipes with gullies and I.C.'s, together with 2 W.C's.
Bank Top—Craggs' Property (1)	...	15 yards of sanitary pipes with gullies and waste pipe.
Sleekburn—Ward's Property (1)	...	10 yards of sanitary pipes with gulley and I.C.

Defects.—Field Pipes, untrapped gullies, and cesspools.

147 cases of Nuisances arising from Drains, W.C.'s, Yards, Animals, etc., were remedied in various parts of the district.

3 Insanitary Stables were abolished on account of defective drainage.

27 Defective Conveniences were repaired in the following districts:—
Netherton, 16 ; Bedlington, 11.

16 Defective Water Services were repaired.

There seems to be an increasing number of minor nuisances in which the individual seems to shirk his or her responsibility. These are principally of the nature of uncleanness in and around houses, unwonted destruction to property, and keeping of animals. As regards the latter, owing to the war, sanitary measures in this respect have been relaxed, but the time has now arrived when the L.A. must take drastic steps to prohibit the keeping of animals and fowls unless under suitable conditions, and not, as in so many cases, in or about dwelling houses. This applies more particularly to fowls and rabbits, and unless such are kept in gardens and not in yards adjoining the houses, orders will be served for the abatement of these nuisances. If the community cannot realize what results from such acts of laziness as regards uncleanness, then the L.A. must find means of them doing so.

Registered Cowsheds and Dairies, 36.

Registered Purveyors, 8.

27 notices served for whitewashing and cleansing, and 63 visits paid.

Common Lodging Houses—

4 Registered. 7 Informal Notices served for cleansing. 35 visits made.

Infectious Disease, Prevention—

290 Houses have been disinfected, and 120 lots of Bedding and Clothing.

Cases of Overcrowding have been abated, although war conditions have made this almost impossible.

Condemned Foodstuffs—

18 cwts. of Chilled Meat and 64 stones 6 lbs. of Bacon and Ham were condemned as unfit for human food.

During the year 365 Informal Notices and 2 Formal Notices have been served.

HOUSING.

It is unnecessary to make any lengthy statement on this subject. That there is urgent need for good working-class dwellings is beyond doubt. The 5 years of war and cessation in building has resulted in approximately a deficiency of 400 houses, whilst in the 10 years previous, 1053 houses were built. Bearing in mind that even in pre-war times insanitary dwellings and overcrowding existed, it is evident that nothing less than 500 houses will meet the needs of the district. It is to be hoped that the L.A. will not consider the Housing Scheme complete until they have adequately met these requirements. A housing inspection of the district was conducted in the early part of the year by the Sanitation Committee, Acting Surveyor and Medical Officer. At that time 185 houses were found unfit for habitation, and 144 cases of overcrowding existed, but, naturally, the Council was powerless to immediately remedy it. Of the 185 houses, a large portion were overcrowded in area, and in such cases demolition is the only means of dealing with these dwellings. They are localised in East End, Bedlington ; Scotland Gate, and Guide Post. In other cases drastic structural alteration is necessary, and improved conveniences required in order to make them fit for habitation.

The undesirable dwelling houses might be classified as follows :—

- (1) Houses which are unfit for habitation and overcrowded in area, and in which demolition is the only remedy.
- (2) Houses in which drastic structural alteration is required, particularly in the provision of sufficient light and air space in the sleeping rooms.
- (3) Houses which are in themselves fit for habitation but the conveniences are either insufficient or unsuitable.
- (4) Back to back houses, of which there are approximately 200 in the district, and in which through ventilation is highly necessary.
- (5) Houses which have unlawfully been converted from self-contained tenemented dwellings through the selfish motives of the owners. Reversion in these cases is strongly urged.

It will thus be seen that early and fearless action must be taken in order to remedy these undesirable circumstances, for good housing means good health, and if we wish to deal efficiently with various infectious diseases we can only do so by having conditions favourable to prevention.

In self-contained houses the property of the L.A., opportunity would be afforded of compelling tenants to recognize their responsibility from a Sanitary standpoint, and would be the means of preventing many minor nuisances which are so common in property of private ownership, and in which unfortunately, particularly in tenemented houses, great difficulty arises in imposing the duty of abatement on the responsible person.

The scheme for the building of 100 houses by the L.A. is near a stage of completion, and the building sites selected permit of a large extension of the present scheme. The assistance given by the L.G.B. has now been more definitely stated, and although the number at the present under consideration is insufficient, yet financial obligations demand steady and continued and not revolutionary methods. The Council are again greatly indebted to Mr. Baker, Chairman of the Housing and Sanitation Committee, for his untiring work in connection with the Scheme.

PRIVATE STREET WORKS.

The necessity for early action is fully recognized by the Council, and seeing that the work in this direction is general throughout the district, there is no need to enumerate the areas. It is to be hoped that the Council will press forward this work, which has been in abeyance during the war.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION.

Considering the undesirable effects of war on the health of the community the year might be termed satisfactory, seeing that the Infantile Mortality Rate has been reduced, and likewise the incidence and death rate from Tuberculosis.

The Death Rate is excessively high, but for the Influenza there is every reason to assume that this would also have shown a decrease.

Now that the war is over, the shortcomings of the past 5 years can only be overcome by progressing more quickly than in pre-war days.

Our first duty to the nation is to make good the loss in the war by promoting measures to minimise the loss of life at home and build a strong and healthy race. With this in view, the Housing and Maternity and Child Welfare Schemes must take precedence over all other questions that may be considered.

It is also advisable that the Council adopt the Infectious Diseases Prevention Act, 1890, which gives additional power in dealing with Infectious Diseases, also the Public Health Acts Amendment Act, 1907, in part or in its entirety, but particularly Sections 25, 35, 49, 57 and 61, which give additional powers in dealing with unpaved yards, dampness of houses caused by defective spouting, and suitable W.C. accommodation.

I take the opportunity of thanking the Chairman and Members of the Council for their courtesy and assistance given me in carrying out the duties of Medical Officer.

I am, Gentlemen,

Your obedient Servant,

W. HUDSON, M.D., D.P.H., etc.,

Medical Officer of Health.

April, 29th, 1919.